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BLM restricts fires in Virgin River Canyon Recreation Area

Due to extreme fire conditions, open fires and charcoal will be prohibited in the Virgin River Canyon Recreation Area in Arizona beginning Friday, May 13, officials with the Bureau of Land Management announced today.

Above average rainfall this winter and spring produced a large amount of invasive grass throughout the recreation area, which is about 15 miles southwest of St. George, Utah, along Interstate 15. This non-native grass has dried and poses a serious fire threat.

“These grasses and other ‘fine fuels’ can ignite into a large blaze in an instant from the smallest spark,” said BLM Arizona Strip District Manager Roger Taylor.

Fire danger is also high in the other low desert areas of the western Arizona Strip and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. While fire restrictions are not being implemented in these areas at this time, fire officials are discouraging fire use. They are also reminding visitors to be careful with vehicles and motorized equipment.

“Off-road driving is prohibited on the Arizona Strip, but even parking a vehicle in grass on the side of the road has ignited large fires in these conditions,” Taylor said.

ATVs, chain saws and other equipment should have working spark arresters to reduce fire danger.

The fire restrictions will remain in effect until the fire danger has been reduced to a level deemed safe.

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